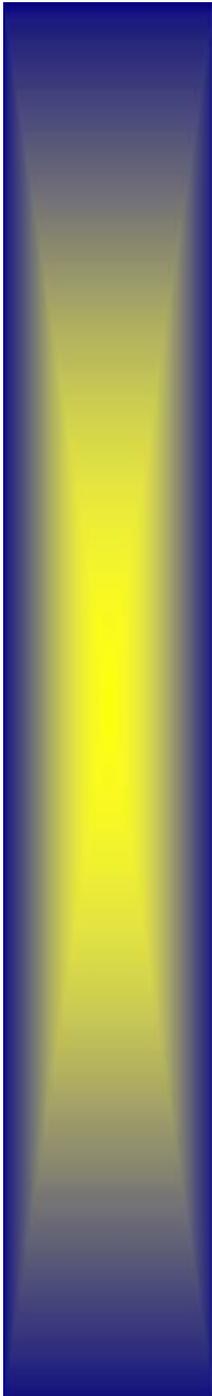




Registered Charity
No. 299595



Annual Report 2007-2008



www.wbct.org.uk

Mission Statement

Restoring in partnership the Wessex waterways through Wiltshire and Oxfordshire to reconnect them with the main network by 2014.

Charitable Aims

To protect, conserve and improve the route of the Wilts & Berks and North Wilts Canals, and branches, for the benefit of the community and environment, with the ultimate goal of restoring a continuous navigable waterway linking the Kennet & Avon Canal near Melksham, Wiltshire, the River Thames near Abingdon, Oxfordshire and the Thames and Severn Canal near Cricklade, Wiltshire.

Objectives

1. Convince local authorities, government departments and local organisations of the benefits and feasibility of the proposed restoration.
2. Convince landowners, local commerce and the general public of the merits of restoration.
3. Secure the route of the waterway and adequate water supplies.
4. Establish the Trust as a key member of a partnership with local authorities and other bodies that will facilitate restoration of the canal.
5. Implement an agreed programme for full restoration of the canal.

Legal Structure

The Trust is a Registered Charity, No. 299595, and a Non-Profit-Distributing Company Limited by Guarantee, Registered in England and Wales No. 2267719. Its Registered Office Address is: 117 High Street, Wootton Bassett, Swindon, Wilts. SN4 7AU.

Patron

HRH The Duchess of Cornwall

President

Dr David Fletcher CBE

Vice-Presidents

Neil Rumbol (Founder)

Roger Crapper

Trustees during the year

Chairman

Vice Chairman

Vice Chairman

Secretary

Treasurer

Directors

John Laverick

Alan Norris

Luke Walker

Tracey Quinn

Peter Kinsman

Raymond Aldridge

Rachael Banyard

Richard Bellamy

Martin Buckland

George Eycott

Janet Flanagan

Colin Fletcher

Douglas Harris

Robert Jones

Verity Mackie

Kenneth Oliver

Brian Roberts

Brian Stovold

Jennifer Stratton

Edward Thomas

Christopher Toms

David Warren

President's Foreword

From my personal experience of leading waterway restoration throughout the country I know that success is obtained through strong partnerships. The Wilts & Berks Canal Trust is well supported by the Wilts & Berks Canal Partnership. A partnership that has strength in its diverse composition and from the stewardship and wise council provided by its president Lord Lansdowne, a leader in the field leisure resource development.



Having taken a great leap forward through the £250K Stage 1 award received last year from the Big Lottery it is heartening to note that despite the disappointment of not receiving the Stage 2 award the Cricklade Country Way Partnership remains as strong as ever. This Partnership will in due course deliver the Cricklade Country Way Project to the people of North Wiltshire. A project that of course includes much of the North Wilts Canal.

Swindon Borough Council working in partnership with the Trust will, I am sure, gain greatly from the regeneration opportunities that a waterway brings to an urban environment. Opportunities that have been visualised by the Borough's forward-thinking Leader who is strongly supported by the management team of the Trust.

Working within Partnerships such as these, I know that the Trust will continue to achieve much over the coming years and will have good reason to celebrate these achievements at the 100th anniversary of the Act of Abandonment in 2014.

Dr David Fletcher CBE

Chairman's Report

This has been another memorable year for the Trust with membership numbers and support from the wider community continuing to grow. Particular thanks to the Underwood Trust whose continuing support largely finances the office, administrators, and Chief Executive giving us the ability to progress at a much faster pace than would otherwise be the case.

Early in the year members of the Cricklade Country Way Management Team were very busy finalising our Stage 2 Lottery bid. By late autumn we were to learn that we were not one of the three of the 23 short listed projects to receive a Stage 2 award. It is clear however that the Stage 1 award of £1/4 million has enabled our project and that of our partners to take a significant step forward. The CCW Management Team subsequently confirmed that the CCW Partnership would continue in being to ensure that this exciting project will be completed for the benefit of the residents of Swindon and North Wiltshire albeit over a slightly longer timescale than would have been possible with a Big Lottery Fund capital grant.

Great progress has been made all along the canal, but much attention has focused on the proposed central Swindon route. A Workshop took place led by Halcrow, jointly appointed by Swindon Borough Council and the Trust. A gathering of business representatives from the town followed this Workshop addressed by the Leader of the Council explaining with great passion his vision of our waterway as an agent for regeneration in Swindon. There

were no dissenters within the audience and much support was voiced. The Halcrow report demonstrating that the proposed scheme is technically feasible has now been completed.

Swindon Borough Council later called another important meeting with the developers of Wichelstowe. Attended by the Trust, this meeting confirmed the need to get the canal under the M4 during the currency of the works in the Southern Development Area. The Borough informed the Developer it was their intention that this output would be achieved.

Two of our volunteer Directors decided to reduce the amount of work with which they were then engaged. Martin Buckland relinquished his roles as Fund Raising Director and Project Director East to concentrate on running the newly formed Abingdon Branch of the Trust. Jan Flanagan relinquished her role as Events Coordinator to concentrate on researching the history of the canal. On behalf of all members of the Trust, I would like to thank them both for the excellent work that they have done in their specialist fields over many years. They have both contributed greatly to the growing success of the Trust.

Following the last AGM, Louise Ainley, Robert Jones and Brian Stovold were welcomed on board as directors of the Trust. Unfortunately Louise Ainley's term as Company Secretary was short-lived following career relocation. The role was however immediately taken on by Tracey Quinn. Verity Mackie has joined the team to work as Events Director.

During the 10 months of my year (having been away from Trust business for two months) I chaired or attended as representative of the Trust well over 70 meetings. One of the most enjoyable events in which I participated was the sponsored "Walk a Boat" between Chippenham and Lacock organised by the Melksham, Calne and Chippenham Branch. Congratulations to Peter Williams, the architect of that very successful day - now an annual event. It was particularly heartening to see so many young people taking part.

I enjoyed representing the Trust at the World Canals Conference in Liverpool and at the Association of Inland Navigation Authorities (AINA) Annual Conference in London. In Liverpool I viewed the work in which BW and its partners are engaged to bring the Leeds and Liverpool Canal right into the historic centre of the city. A good example of how in a similar way our waterway will greatly uplift the historic centre of Swindon. The AINA conference concentrated on the implications of the Water Framework Directive for inland waterways.

Focus last year centred on the junction at the eastern end of the main line with the River Thames. This year the Trust's attention has moved to the western end and to the junction with the Kennet & Avon Canal with the publication of The Melksham River Route Study. Consultants Black & Veatch produced this study with guidance from a steering committee composed of Trust and Inland Waterway Association members. At various public meetings and events these proposals received great support with subsequent local endorsement by Melksham Town Council. British Waterways, through their participation within the Wilts & Berks Canal Partnership, have also expressed support for the proposals that could also provide much needed off-line mooring capacity for the Kennet & Avon Canal.

We have much to celebrate from the last twelve months and many challenges lay ahead but one thing is certain, with the enthusiasm and commitment of the members of this Trust and with the support of its Partnership we will succeed in our endeavours to provide a first class leisure resource for the 21st century encompassing a diverse wildlife habitat providing connectivity between existing wildlife sites across the counties of Wiltshire and Oxfordshire.

John Laverick

Accounts

Statement of Financial Activities for Year ending 31 March 2008

	<u>Unrestricted</u>	<u>Designated</u>	<u>Restricted</u>	<u>Total this</u>	<u>Total last</u>
	<u>funds</u>	<u>funds</u>	<u>funds</u>	<u>year</u>	<u>year</u>
	<u>£</u>	<u>£</u>	<u>£</u>	<u>£</u>	<u>£</u>
<u>Incoming resources</u>					
Donations	5,042	0	101,865	106,907	149,508
Investment income	997	544	5,963	7,504	12,336
Income from charitable trading	7,335			7,335	6,259
Members Subscriptions	19,020			19,020	9,156
Grants	8,296		29,258	37,554	43,285
Landfill Tax Credits			2,103	2,103	25,247
Tax refunds	6,124		500	6,624	2,585
Total incoming resources	46,814	544	139,689	187,047	248,376
<u>Expenditure</u>					
Restoration	11,776	1,323	114,953	128,052	334,168
Fund raising and publicity	12,941	1,021	241	14,203	22,370
Management & Administration	5,037	130	57,629	62,796	54,716
Total expenditure	29,754	2,474	172,823	205,051	411,254
<u>Transfer between funds</u>	625	0	(625)	0	0
Net movement in funds	17,685	(1,930)	(33,759)	(18,004)	(162,878)
<u>Fund balances brought forward</u>	12,690	48,879	149,963	211,532	374,410
<u>Fund balances carried forward</u>	30,375	46,949	116,204	193,528	211,532

Accounts (continued)

Balance Sheet as at 31 March 2008

	<u>Total this</u> <u>year</u> <u>£</u>	<u>Total last</u> <u>year</u> <u>£</u>
Total fixed assets	22,677	25,257
<u>Current assets</u>		
Stocks and work in progress	5,428	5,029
Debtors	8,876	79,229
Short term investments and deposits	138,386	242,382
Cash at bank and in hand	39,161	23,207
Total current assets	191,851	349,847
Short term creditors	20,997	163,572
Net current assets/(liabilities)	170,854	186,275
Net assets	193,531	211,532
Restricted income funds	116,204	149,963
Designated Funds	46,949	48,879
Unrestricted income funds	30,375	12,690
<u>Total funds</u>	193,528	211,532

Notes to Accounts

1. These financial statements have been extracted from the set of accrual based accounts prepared for submission to the Charity Commission. An examination of those accounts has been carried out by our accountants, Morris Owen, in accordance with the General Directions given by the Charity Commissioners. A full set of those accounts is available on request and for a small administration fee.

2. The definitions of the categories of funds are as follows:-

Unrestricted - Those funds that the trustees should spend on any of the charity's purposes

Restricted - Those funds that the trustees are obliged to spend on only particular purposes

Designated - Those funds which the trustees have earmarked for particular purposes

3. Landfill Tax credits have been received from Crapper and Sons Landfill Ltd - £2,125.

4. Restoration expenditure has dropped from £334,168 last year to £128,052 this year. Last year saw abnormally high expenditure due to our newly appointed CEO driving through projects that had the necessary funding in place. This has seen a return to historical levels with the CEO spending much more time on strategic planning, fund raising and supporting the Wilts & Berks Canal Partnership.

5. The Fixed Assets of £22,677 are made up of Land at cost of £8,062, Plant and Machinery at a depreciated value of £11,396, Boats at a depreciated value of £2,422 and office furniture and equipment at a depreciated value of £796.

6. Debtors at the end of this year consist of Gift Aid Tax refund of £2,860 from the Inland Revenue, £2,969 deposit for legal costs on purchase of a land lease in West Vale, £2,982 VAT refund due.

7. The charity had two part time paid employees at the end of this year.

8. There has been no remuneration or other benefits paid to the charity's trustees, or people connected with them, from the charity, other than £30,418 to Cotswold River Cruises for twelve months' services of our Chief Executive Officer.

9. There have been no transactions undertaken by (or on behalf of) the charity in which a trustee or connected person has a material interest.

Grants & Donations

Once again, the Trust would like to register its thanks to all those who have contributed to funding projects; some of the major funding sources are listed below. This list in no way ignores all of the smaller organisations, individuals and trusts who have contributed to the restoration of the Canal.

Alun Griffiths (Contractors) Limited

Awards for All

Crapper & Sons Landfill Ltd

D. Tarrant

Galanthus Trust

IWA South Western

North Wiltshire District Council

R. Banyard

Swindon Borough Council

Thames Water

The Steel Trust

The Underwood Trust

Vale of White Horse District Council

WREN

Y. P. Yearron

Restoration Progress

The Trust has organised its work into four areas broadly in line with the relevant Local Authority districts. Each area has a Director responsible for managing the projects.

West (Colin Fletcher)

Melksham. The branch launched the proposals for a navigable waterway between the Kennet & Avon canal at Semington and the original line of the Wilts & Berks canal north of Melksham during May 2007. Three thousand leaflets were designed, printed and distributed, and displays were maintained in the public library and the Town Hall during the summer.

Forest Farm and Queenfield Farm. This section is currently under care & maintenance – work parties continue under the guidance of Doug Harris in order to maintain the towpath.

Naish Hill to Pewsham Locks. Work has commenced on the wing walls and landing area at Double Bridge. Repair and water-proofing work continues on five culverts and one of the two original spillweirs has been completely renovated.



Work in progress at Pewsham

Calne Lock and rewatered section. All visible brickwork has been completely rebuilt including a flight of steps to the boat landing. Chaveywell Bridge, the landing area and the towpaths have been maintained and kept clean.

Foxham. The restored sections here have continued under care and maintenance. During December and January significant progress was made to seal the leak, subsequently the Elm Farm section has held more water.

Dauntsey. Trust volunteers have continued the care and maintenance of the sections either side of the B4069.

North (Luke Walker)

Seven Locks - Lock 2. Discussions with Wiltshire Highways and with the landowner have reached an outline agreement regarding how navigation will be re-established under Bowds Lane; while enabling this lock to be restored where it is.

Seven Locks - Lock 4. During the first part of a two-week period of canal camps during July, the offside wall of Lock 4 was dismantled down to invert level; ready to start construction of a complete new wall. Serious rain at precisely the wrong moment left a challenging situation with flooded-out workings. The team of canal camp volunteers rose admirably to the challenge, and by the end of the week the first of many concrete pours was achieved. Work has progressed rapidly during the year, on both chamber walls. Waterway Recovery Group teams, the Kent and East Sussex Canal Restoration Group and the Newbury Working Party Group have all given valuable support.



Work underway at Lock 4

Seven Locks - General. During the winter months significant progress was made in laying the towpath hedge from near Lock 1 at the western end of the site to alongside Lock 5 – the easternmost point of the area to which we have access.

Dunnington Aqueduct. This year saw a return of our volunteers to this aqueduct, where urgent repair work was done many years ago. Our volunteers undertook the initial clearance of vegetation from the top of the aqueduct, in preparation for an inspection by the Inland Waterways Association's Honorary Consulting Engineer.

Chaddington Spillway. Work has proceeded rapidly with this major concrete structure, which includes culverts under the towpath. The piers and beams to carry the towpath, and the brick cladding, were taking shape by the end of the year.



Work in progress at Chaddington Spillweir

Hayes Knoll Lock. Work to raise the necessary funds has started, some site preparation work has been done and a further survey for relevant wildlife has been undertaken.

Central (Ken Oliver)

Swindon North Wilts Canal Mouldon Hill. Work was completed by contractors on the Purton Road bridge adjacent to Mouldon Hill Country Park. The completion of this canal trough and a visit by over 150 volunteers from the Waterway Recovery Group in November 2007 for their annual 'Bonfire Bash' has allowed this section of canal to be completed.



The completed Purton Road crossing

Swindon North Wilts and Main Line Wichelstowe. Work has started in Wichelstowe (Southern Development Area) on the first structure and associated canal works for the ever expanding development of the town which will include extensive canal restoration and build.

Swindon North Wilts Canal- Town Centre Proposal. In conjunction with Swindon Borough Council work has been completed on a technical feasibility study to bring the canal back to the town centre on a new route as part of the redevelopment scheme.

East (Ken Oliver)

Shrivenham. Further work from the Trust and visiting Waterway Recovery Group work parties has continued the progress on Steppingstone Lane Bridge.



Work in progress at Steppingstones Lane Bridge

Childrey. Further design work in consultation with the adjacent landowner will allow works to start on this section during 2008.

West Challow. Final works have taken place to complete the permissive footpath.

Abingdon. Jubilee Junction. Some remedial works have been necessary on the canal banks but otherwise passing boats on the River Thames can now cruise the short length of the Wilts & Berks Canal.

Land Ownership

The Trust is conscious that its restoration activities are usually carried out by kind permission of the landowners concerned. The Trust wishes to take this opportunity to thank those landowners who have assisted the Trust in its aims by giving such permission. The Trust also wishes to remind all members and workers of the need to respect the landowner's rights when allowed on to such land.

Communications

With assistance from Roy Cartwright (Swindon chair) we have been monitoring the amount of press coverage given to the Trust over the past year. Whether measured by simple count, column inches or photographs, we have increased press coverage by approximately 40 percent. We have moved from infrequent coverage to over 160 articles in the past year, more than two per week which is some achievement.

This year has seen significant articles in the Evening Advertiser, Wiltshire Gazette and Herald and the Western Daily Press. In addition to print media, you may have seen the canal featured in the BBC's breathing spaces feature



Our work parties have been involved in actively promoting the Trust whilst undertaking restoration. Hi-vis jackets (provided by Morrison Construction) worn during work have proven a great ice-breaker. Two branches have also experimented with 'meet and greet' members during work parties. Their role is to speak to passers by updating them on what we are doing and encouraging them to join their local branch. Initial feedback from this imaginative approach has been extremely positive.

In terms of getting our message to a wider audience, we have sold over 400 DVDs detailing the route of the Wilts and Berks through the Swindon area. These have gone as far as Australia, the United States, France, Germany and Canada.

The town has also seen an information point open in Regents Circus providing images, merchandise and updates on the Trust's activities. Usually busy with a steady stream of interested locals it's well worth a visit if you get a chance.

As to our website, a great deal of work has been done in the background to upgrade it and will allow us to introduce a number of additional facilities for our members.



As always, Dragonfly continues to provide a regular source of information for members as well as attracting an increasingly large postbag on the issues facing the Trust.

Richard Bellamy

Events

October saw the retirement of Janet Flanagan who has looked after events for the Trust for many years and Verity Mackie was appointed as the new Events Director in January.

The Trust continues to promote the waterway restoration project with illustrated talks given to clubs, societies and local groups by members of the branches and by many of the directors. In addition there were displays at waterway events including the Southern Canals Association and the IWA National Waterways Festival at Ely. The very wet summer caused disruption to a number of planned activities including the Latton Basin open day and the Saul Canal Festival. Other events have included displays at the Wootton Bassett Canal Day, the Purton Stoke Historic Fayre , West Wilts Show, Forest Fair, Drayton Historic Weekend, Wanborough Show, Old Town Festival Swindon, Royal International Air Tattoo Fairford, and the Cricklade Show.

The annual sponsored walk from Chippenham to Lacock mainly follows the canal route, and took place in April. We have added to our walks leaflets with the Grove & Wantage walks and are preparing further walks at other locations.

The Wilts & Berks Canal Partnership and Cricklade Country Way held an event at Bowood House in June and the Trust took part with a display and presentation.

The Melksham Calne and Chippenham Branch provided Boat Trips at a number of local events.

A review of display materials produced a new set of exhibition posters which were shown for the first time at the AGM in October

The Wilts & Berks Canal Partnership

Working in partnership, the project has made considerable progress and it is pleasing to have a continuing strong working relationship between the Trust with its enthusiastic volunteers and the officers and elected members of the Local Authorities, and other national organisations

The disappointment of not receiving a capital grant for the Cricklade Country Way has only slightly diminished the enthusiasm of the wider partnership to continue to develop and build this exciting scheme.

We are fortunate to be supported by Lord Landsdowne as President of the Partnership and thank him for his continuing support.

Work is well underway on a major re-organisation of local government in Wiltshire; the new single Council will provide a change in environment for the project - hopefully positive. This comes on top of the retirement of Chaloner Chute as Partnership Project Officer whose hard work over the last five years has helped the project take huge strides towards full restoration of the waterway.

At 31st March 2008 the member bodies are:

British Waterways
Commercial Group
Cooper Tires Europe Ltd
Cotswold Canals Trust
Cricklade Town Council
Environment Agency
Inland Waterways Association
Kennet & Avon Canal Trust
Melksham Town Council
Melksham Trust
Melksham Without Parish Council
North Wiltshire District Council
Oxfordshire County Council
Swindon Borough Council
Thames Water Utilities Ltd
Vale of White Horse District Council
West Wiltshire District Council
Wilts & Berks Canal Trust
Wiltshire County Council

Fleur de Rhé-Philippe